

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS YEREVAN 001394

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR EUR/CACEN, DRL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [AM](#)

SUBJECT: PUSHING THE WRONG BUTTONS, OR HOW NOT TO  
PLAY LIKE DEMOCRATS

Sensitive But Unclassified. Please protect  
accordingly.

-----  
PARTY TRAINING DISRUPTED  
-----

1. (SBU) Opposition leader Aram Sargsian and his Republic Party have been among the most vocal opponents of the current government in Armenia and have recently announced an August revolution in the press, along with claims that the USG will support Sargsian's presidential and revolutionary ambitions. Against that backdrop, security services disrupted a regularly-scheduled National Democratic Institute (NDI) "train the trainer" session (on direct voter contact and voter identification) in the Armavir region west of Yerevan July 30. According to Republic Party activists, the training session was disrupted without violence (the in-country NDI representative was not present at the time).

-----  
KEEPING CLOSE WATCH  
-----

2. (SBU) Opposition newspapers Iravunk and Aravot ran stories detailing the events in Armavir in their August 2 editions, and the Republic Party made a formal complaint to the Prosecutor General August 3 (with copies provided to the human rights ombudsman, media outlets, international organizations and resident embassies). Local NDI representative noted that NDI was conducting similar training simultaneously with the Dashnak, National Democratic Union, Liberal Ramkavar and Orinats Yerkir (Country of Law) parties -- i.e., with both government and opposition parties. NDI also told us that four other training sessions proceeded without incident over the weekend.

-----  
COMMENT: THE SKY'S NOT FALLING YET  
-----

3. (SBU) Although the local Armavir authorities' decision to disrupt the NDI training was clearly out of line, we are encouraged that there was no violence. Given the fact that NDI successfully carried out training in four other regions of Armenia on the same day, we doubt that there was a centralized order to shut them down, and believe that the Armavir events were likely isolated incidents.  
GODFREY